DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 320 EA 005 431

AUTHOR	McMilan, Hollis; And Others
TITLE	Between-School, Intra-District Student Transfers. Oregon School Study Council Bulletin, Vol. 17, No. 1.
INSTITUTION	Oregon School Study Council, Eugene.
SPONS AGENCY	Oregon Univ., Eugene. Office of Scientific and Scholarly Research.
PUB DATE	Sep 73
NOTE	28p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Oregon School Study Council, College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403 ($2.50, $2.00 for OSSC members)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Schools; *Family School Relationship; Questionnaires; *School Districts; *School Statistics; Secondary Schools; Statistical Surveys; *Transfer Policy; *Transfer Students
IDENTIFIERS	*Oregon

ABSTRACT

The first part of this bulletin serves to inform readers about the various transfer policies and practices that do exist in various major school districts in Oregon and which affect family choice in schooling. By being aware of these policies, a district can reassess its own transfer policy and practices and its attitude toward transfers. Next, the document provides a more detailed report on one school district (Eugene School District 4J). Files and questionnaire data were examined to determine who attempted to make use of student transfers, their reasons for doing so, their sources of information regarding the possibility of student transfers, and the relationship of transfers to the socioeconomic characteristics of the district. (Authors/WM)

SEP 18 1973

ED 082320

Oregon School Study Council BULLETIN

Vol. 17, No. 1
September 1973
Price - $2.50 ($2.00 for OSSC members)

BETWEEN-SCHOOL, INTRA-DISTRICT STUDENT TRANSFERS

by

Hollis McMilan, David Sonnenfeld, and Hans Jansen

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Published by:

OREGON SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL
124 College of Education
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon
97403

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PREFACE

There has been much ado about family choice in schooling: some, arguing for cultural pluralism and the rights of families, believe that families should be able to choose which school their children shall attend. Others, fearing deepened socio-economic and cultural polarization, and a decrease in the quality of public schooling, have argued against the concept of families choosing schools for their children. Substantive data concerning the effects of such choice are sparse.

This Bulletin presents a two-part overview of family choice in schooling. The first part, written in May, 1972, deals with major school districts in Oregon. The second part, written in October, 1972, presents information from an in-depth study of Eugene School District 4J. Both studies were supported partially by a grant from the Office of Scientific and Scholarly Research in the Graduate School of the University of Oregon.

Part I was written by Hollis McMilan, Hans Jansen, and David Sonnenfeld; Part II, by David Sonnenfeld. Hollis McMilan is a first-year law student at the University of Oregon School of Law. Previously, he was associated with the Consumer Research Center at the University of Oregon. Hans Jansen received his M.B.A. from the University of Oregon College of Business Administration. He was also formerly associated with the University of Oregon Consumer Research Center. David Sonnenfeld is an Independent Scholar and a Research Associate at the U of O Consumer Research Center. He is currently serving as a consultant for the Childhood and Government Project at the University of California School of Law, Berkeley.

This Bulletin serves only to inform readers about the various transfer policies and practices that do exist in various school districts, and which affect family choice in schooling. By being aware of these, a district can reassess its own transfer policy, practices, and its attitude toward transfers--and

change, if necessary, to a more suitable plan for handling transfers.

BETWEEN-SCHOOL, INTRA-DISTRICT STUDENT TRANSFERS

In major school districts of Oregon

by Hollis McMilan, David Sonnenfeld, and Hans Jansen

Introduction

Parents in some school districts have greater amounts of freedom in regard to choosing schools than do parents in other school districts. The first part of this Bulletin compares the policies of major school districts* in Oregon in regard to students' ability to attend various schools.** Putting the various formal and informal policies concerning choice of schools into a common perspective, we explore the frequency of between-school transfer requests, and the frequency that those requests were granted in each of the major districts. We also hypothesize about reasons why the transfer requests were made, and suggest some variables that may be involved in determining the frequency of those requests.

Methods

To learn which Oregon districts fit our definition of "major school district," we consulted the 1971-1972 Directory of Oregon Schools and Community Colleges. Eleven districts fit our criteria. They were then contacted by phone. From each district, we requested a copy of its official student transfer and attendance area policy, as well as estimates of the number

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*"Major school district" is defined here as a district serving a single urban or contiguous suburban area, and administering more than one high school.

**Families may exercise choice in schooling by choosing between classrooms in a school; but we are concerned here only with choice between schools.

of transfer requests and the number of requests granted for the 1971-1972 school year. Finally, each district's administrators were interviewed by phone or in person concerning their attitudes toward student transfers.

Most of the statistical information in the first part of this Bulletin is drawn from letters and copies of policies which we received from the school districts. Other data (the number of schools, and size of student population) are drawn from the 1971-1972 Directory of Oregon Schools and Community Colleges and from telephone conversations.

No conclusions are drawn as to the relative effectiveness, adequacy, or desirability of various school districts' policies. Our task here is that of objective comparative analysis.

Findings

The following section contains information concerning the size of the student population, the number of schools, the number of student transfers requested and granted, and the type of policy in each major school district in Oregon. Numbers of requested and granted transfers are for the school year 1971-1972, and are in many cases only estimates. The data are summarized in Table 1, which follows this section.

Albany -- 3,807 students, 5 schools.
10 transfers requested, 2 granted.

Albany District 8J has no written or officially adopted transfer policy. To deal with the few transfer requests they get each year, the administration operates under the idea that transfers will not be granted unless a special request is made by an outside agency such as a doctor, judge, etc.

Beaverton -- 18,379 students, 34 schools.
85 transfers granted.*

Beaverton District 48 has a formal, written student transfer policy. The policy first outlines the procedure a parent and student should follow in requesting a transfer: They first acquire

*Figure on transfers requested was not available, as initial requests go to the principals and are not necessarily recorded.

forms from the Instruction Office; then they fill them out and deliver them to the principal of the school the student is then attending. After the request is reviewed by the principals of both schools involved, it is passed on to the director of the Instruction Office with a recommendation.

The policy sets out four considerations by which a request should be judged. They are: (a) educational need; (b) teacher-pupil ratio in the receiving school; (c) change in attendance boundaries requiring a change in school; and (d) the date of application.

Beaverton's general attitude toward student transfers is summarized in a sentence from the policy statement: "Transfers within the district by students to a school outside their attendance area shall be minimized."

Corvallis -- 7,793 students, 20 schools. 28 transfers granted.*

Corvallis District 509J has no officially adopted transfer policy. The feeling of the administration is that transfers should be granted only in hardship cases. Mr. Hardman, Director of Personnel, defined hardship cases as psychological problems (documented by a doctor's letter), discipline problems, and educational problems. Principals of the involved schools decide on the transfer requests.

Eugene -- 21,156 students, 44 schools. 278 transfers requested, 266 granted.

Eugene District 4J has a formally adopted, written policy. The policy allows considerable administrative latitude in granting transfers. It states that students will attend the school located in the attendance area in which they reside unless the superintendent, upon presentation of "good and sufficient" reasons, allows them to transfer. Two categories are given which are good and sufficient reasons. They are the health of the child and the hardship of the parents. Administrative attitudes toward transfers are generally supportive.

*Figure on requested transfers was not available because initial requests go to principals rather than to central administrators.

Gresham -- 4,495 students, 3 high schools. 115 transfers granted.* **

Gresham Union High School District 2J does not have a centrally administered student transfer policy. Its official policy requires the principals of the schools involved to decide whether or not a transfer is granted. Their decision may be appealed to the superintendent. The official district policy states that transfers can only be granted when a student has exceptional needs, as determined by their principals. Exceptional needs is interpreted to mean emotional or physical needs as opposed to educational needs. The administration does not encourage transfers.

Klamath Falls (School District No. 1 and Union High School District No. 2) -- 4,637 students, 10 schools. 11 transfers requested, 11 granted.

Neither of the Klamath Falls districts has an official written policy. There are three factors in practice which administrators use to judge transfer requests: a) health; b) domestic relations problems; and c) to make an adjustment in class loads.

Lake Oswego -- 6,265 students, 10 schools. 72 transfers requested, 66 granted.

The Lake Oswego district's written policy on student transfers states all acceptable reasons for transferring. They include cases in which: a) a student moves from one attendance area to another during the school year and is allowed to finish that year in his old school; b) cases in which a student anticipates moving into a new attendance area after the beginning of a semester and wishes to enroll in the school for the attendance area into which he will be moving; c) cases in which a student has completed two years in a particular high school and wishes to complete his final

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*Figure on requested transfers was not available because initial requests go to principals rather than to central administrators.

**This figure includes not only transfers between schools (as we are considering in this Bulletin), but also transfers from one room to another within the same school, and re-admissions after withdrawal or suspension.

year there even though he has moved from that attendance area; and finally, d) a discretionary category which provides for transfers in cases where the educational interests or physical or emotional considerations indicate a transfer would be warranted. Discretionary transfers are decided upon by the superintendent. The attitude of the administration toward transfers is supportive, "as long as class loads are not upset."

North Clackamas -- 14,000 students, 27 schools. 32 transfers requested, 25 granted.

The transfer policy of North Clackamas District 12, at the time of this writing, considers three reasons valid for granting transfers: a) if continued attendance at the present school is considered undesirable by the administration; b) if a family or student hardship exists; c) if a family moves from the attendance area during a student's eighth, eleventh, or twelfth year, or during the final nine weeks of the school year.

Portland -- 72,118 students, 118 schools. 1,647 transfers requested, 1,192 granted.

The opening paragraph of the official policy on attendance areas and transfers is significant in demonstrating the Portland Public Schools' attitude toward transfers:

> In order to assure the best educational opportunities for all students, efforts should be made to encourage students to transfer on a voluntary basis to and from schools in a manner which will increase the heterogeneity of student populations according to racial, ethnic, social and economic factors in each school.

This statement reflects the uniqueness of the Portland district. Portland, being the only large urban area in the state with a sizeable minority population, under court order, has to actively seek a racial balance within its schools. Ideal balance is considered to be 10 to 25 percent Black. One method of achieving this balance is the administrative transfer. Each year, Black students are sought out by district psychologists, counselors, and social workers who counsel in neighborhoods where Blacks live. Black students who are attending majority-Black schools are asked to go to majority-Anglo schools. In transfers of this type, the school district provides transportation for the student to his new school.

Two other types of transfer have

also been established by district policy in Portland, "Requested Transfers" and "Hardship Transfers." "Requested Transfers" is a catch-all category for which the only conditions are space available and racial balance. "Hardship Transfers" refer to students who may have some special need (i.e., health problems, special curriculum, transportation, proximity to job, etc.).

The Portland Public Schools also have procedures which allow for concurrent or "cooperative" enrollment in two schools. This policy allows students to take courses offered in more than one school. Transportation is not provided for cooperative enrollment.

It should be noted that several schools in the Portland district are district-wide in nature, or are open to selected attendance areas. Most of these schools are at the pre-school or high school level.

Salem -- 22,543 students, 44 schools. 200 transfers requested, 170 granted.

Salem District 24J has a written policy which states all acceptable reasons for transferring. However, this policy is several years old and the administration has chosen to disregard the rigid approach taken toward transfers in the policy statement. In fact, all that is now required is a written request from a parent giving a valid reason for the change. "Valid reason" is interpreted as "any reason not considered by the school administration or the central administration to be a 'minor beef' with a teacher or another student." The attitude toward transfers is favorable. The superintendent indicates that the district has discussed the possibility of open enrollment.

Springfield -- 9,821 students, 20 schools. 100 transfers requested, 29 granted.

At the time of this writing, Springfield changed attendance boundaries. This change has resulted in a change in written and enacted transfer policy in order to treat the increased number of transfer requests with some consistency. In the past, transfer requests were handled by the principals of the schools

involved. Each request is now acted upon by a committee of four administrators (two assistant superintendents and two supervisory personnel). The committee has a list of guidelines setting forth acceptable reasons for transferring. Most are reasons for allowing a student to complete the year or grading period in his old school. A senior in high school whose parents move from the attendance area after the beginning of the school year may complete the year in his old school. A student whose family moves after the first third of any grading period may be permitted to remain throughout the grading period. Transfers may also be made, according to the guidelines, to correct "an educational problem." In such cases, the member of the committee to whom the request is submitted is responsible for determining the facts of the case from the teacher(s) and school(s) involved. Parents are allowed to be present at the committee meetings. The procedure of gaining a hearing before the committee is also spelled out: the parent and student fill out a Petition for Change of School Assignment and leave it with the building administrator. Overall, the district does not encourage transfers.

Discussion

Policies and attitudes toward student transfers encountered in this study differ. Official, written transfer policies range from nonexistent policies to those specifically enumerating each acceptable reason for transferring. Administrators' attitudes toward intra-district student transfers range from supportive to non-supportive.

Three of the eleven districts, the Albany, Corvallis, and Klamath Falls districts, have no officially adopted, written policy. These are among the smaller districts. The policies under which these districts operate are informal, administrative policies.

Formally adopted, written policies are found in the other eight districts studied. These policies may be separated into three categories: 1) the Gresham, Lake Oswego, North Clackamas, Salem, and

Table 1. BETWEEN-SCHOOL, INTRA-DISTRICT STUDENT TRANSFERS IN MAJOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN OREGON, 1971-1972 SCHOOL YEAR. SUMMARY TABLE.

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TRANSFER REQUESTS	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TRANSFERS GRANTED	PERCENT OF TRANSFERS GRANTED
Albany	3,807	5	10	2	20
Beaverton	18,739	34	NA*	85	--
Corvallis	7,739	20	NA*	28	--
Eugene	21,156	44	278	266	90
Gresham	4,495	3	NA*	115**	--
Klamath Falls	7,114	22	11	11	100
Lake Oswego	6,265	11	72	66	90
North Clackamas	14,000	27	32	25	80
Portland	72,118	118	1,647	1,192	75
Salem	22,543	44	200	170	85
Springfield	9,821	20	190	29	20

*Figures on requested transfers were not available from these districts because initial requests go to principals rather than to central administrators, and are not recorded.

**This figure includes transfers from one room to another within the same school and re-admissions after withdrawal or suspension, as well as between-school transfers.

Springfield districts have policies which explicitly state most or all of the acceptable reasons for transferring, leaving little room for administrative discretion. 2) The Eugene and Beaverton districts have adopted policies which give administrators considerable latitude in determining whether or not a transfer should be granted. 3) The Portland Public Schools' policy establishes three types of transfers, one of which involves the active recruiting of students, especially non-Anglo students, for transfers. The single consideration of racial balance makes the Portland district's policy unlike those of other districts. In practice, Portland allows easy transfers for Blacks (except to the few majority-Black schools) while making transfers for Anglos quite difficult.

In evaluating the total nature of a district's transfer policy, administrative attitudes toward transfers can be a factor equally or more important than the written policy. Salem Public Schools administrators, for instance, have an attitude toward transfers which overlooks the specifics of the district's written policy: in the words of the Salem Public Schools' superintendent, they are granting transfers "quite freely now," in spite of a relatively restrictive written policy. Likewise, in Lake Oswego, a positive attitude toward transfers may contribute to a higher rate of transfers than in similar districts. In districts other than those just mentioned, administrative attitudes tend to follow the written policy of their district. Those districts with flexible written transfer policies tend to have flexible attitudes; those with more rigid policies tend to have rigid attitudes.

A third factor which may affect transfers is the administrative level at which transfer decisions are made. The Beaverton, Corvallis, and Gresham districts rely to a great extent on principals of the two schools involved either to make the final decision, or to forward recommendations to a district administrator. The Springfield district depends on a committee to evaluate transfer requests. In the remaining districts, it is generally

a district level administrator who determines the outcome of transfer requests.

There appears to be a relationship between the size of the student population and the way in which transfer policies are administered. For instance, it is only in smaller districts (3,000 to 7,000 students) that no written policies exist. Those districts which have a policy allowing considerable administrative latitude have student populations of between 18,000 and 23,000.* Remaining districts, those with more strictly defined policies, either fall between these two clusters, or are special cases (e.g., the Portland Public Schools must consider racial balance; the Gresham district administers only high schools).

An area which warrants further study is how stated policies and attitudes affect the number of transfer requests. Our data suggest there may be a relationship between strictness of policy and the number of requests. For instance, Albany, Klamath Falls, and North Clackamas have fewer requests per pupil than the other districts for which figures are available. In each case, stated policy or attitude or both is not favorable toward transfers. Springfield, the district having the highest number of requests per pupil is not very representative of how strictness of policy relates to the number of requests--since it changed boundaries at the time of this study. Eugene, Salem, and Lake Oswego, the districts having the next highest number of requests per pupil, have positive attitudes and/or flexible policies toward transfers.

Other variables which may relate to the frequency of transfer requests and the reasons for those requests are: (1) the degree of clarity of district attendance boundary lines; (2) the placement of attendance boundary lines (i.e., making an area on one side of a river part of a district on the other side of the river, when there is a more easily

*Salem which has a student population of 22,543 is considered in this category because in practice, its policy allows considerable latitude.

accessible school on the same side);
(3) the degree of differentiation between schools in specific school districts;
(4) the degree of differentiation within schools in specific school districts;
(5) the amount of information (particularly via the media) that has been made available about individual schools; and
(6) the heterogeneity/homogeneity (in terms of socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, etc.) of each district's population.

BETWEEN-SCHOOL, INTRA-DISTRICT STUDENT TRANSFERS

An in-depth report: Eugene, Oregon*

by David Sonnenfeld

Introduction

Parents in Eugene, Oregon school district 4J have a great deal of flexibility in choosing schools for their children. They may, if they desire, request that their children be transferred to schools other than the ones to which they have been assigned. Such requests are made to the Superintendent's office and are usually decided upon by an Administrative Assistant, who considers each request on an individual basis. No transportation is provided if the request is accepted. Little effort has been made by the district to publicize the policy. Of 299 requests for student transfers received by the district for the 1971-72 school year, almost 90 percent were granted.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to determine:

(a) who, in relation to the total population of the school district, had attempted to make use of student transfers for the 1971-72 school year;

(b) the reasons for which parents

*This is an abridged version of Family Choice in Schooling: A Case Study. Intra-District Student Transfers, Eugene, Oregon. Published by the Office of Scientific and Scholarly Research at the University of Oregon, the full report is available from the Consumer Research Center, College of Business, University of Oregon, for a nominal fee.

had been willing to sacrifice the cost of pursuing the transfer request and the cost of their children charging schools;

(c) why certain schools, if any, had been requested more frequently than others;

(d) from whom parents had obtained information about the possibility of student transfers;

(e) the degree of parents' satisfaction with their children's present school situations; and

(f) the degree to which students in the district had become more or less homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socio-economic characteristics) as a result of the student transfers.

Hypotheses

We hypothesized that:

(a) student transfers had been utilized predominantly by families of high socio-economic status;

(b) parents had requested transfers largely to enable their children to go to curricularly or environmentally differentiated schools;

(c) some schools had been requested more frequently than others, due to their differentiation from other schools;

(d) parents had obtained information about the possibility of transfers from a number of sources, but particularly from their friends and colleagues;

(e) that many parents would be quite satisfied with their children's present school situations, while a substantial number would be still dissatisfied; and that

(f) students in the district had become substantially more homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socio-economic characteristics) as a result of student transfers.

Methods

Data were first obtained from original written requests made to District 4J by the parents. As school district files on individuals are confidential material, all data were collected by District 4J personnel and presented to us in aggregate form. Data from District 4J files, for each transfer request for the 1971-72 school year, included:

(a) the reasons stated for the request,

(b) the school the transfer was requested to, and

(c) the status of the request.

We also received data concerning the school requested and the school of origination for each student involved in a transfer request.*

*Note the difference between "transfer request" and "student" in this paragraph: a single transfer request might pertain to several students.

Additional data were obtained via mailed questionnaires (see Appendix A). To protect the privacy of the parents involved, the district addressed and mailed all questionnaires. Questionnaires were mailed to 277 families (seven families had made more than one request; 15 requests had been initiated not by families, but by correctional officials). No attempt was made to follow up the original mailing, due to the excessive amounts of district time that would have been involved in addressing and mailing. One hundred-seventeen, or 42 percent, of the questionnaires were completed and returned over a four-week period.

Where possible, data from district 4J files were compared to data obtained via the questionnaire as a check of the latter data's validity, and vice versa.

Findings

Who requested transfers? Questionnaire data indicate that those parents who had requested student transfers for the 1971-72 school year were likely of higher relative socio-economic status than were Eugene families as a whole. Respondents had larger annual incomes than Eugene families as a whole; they had also had more schooling, and were more predominantly managerial-professional and white-collar workers than various comparative populations in Eugene.

In regard to length of residency, 36 percent of the families in the sample had lived in their present junior high school district for less than two years, 26 percent for two to five years, and 38 percent for more than five years. This is roughly comparable to Census data for Eugene which show that 39 percent of all families and unrelated individuals had lived in their present home for less than two years, 29 percent for two to five years, and 32 percent for more than five years.

Forty-nine percent of the sample population intended to continue living in their present junior high school district for less than two years, 22 percent for two to five years, and 49 percent for more than five years.

Why did parents request transfers? Data which revealed reasons why parents had requested student transfers were obtained both from district files and from

questionnaire data. Data obtained from the questionnaire were of two types: we first asked respondents to state the reasons for their requests which they had stated to the district; then, in order to check the validity of data in district files, we asked respondents to state any reasons they had had for the request, but had not stated to the district.

Data obtained from the first question on the questionnaire (reasons mentioned) follow extremely closely to the data from district files, with one exception: the number of negative reasons mentioned on the questionnaire were considerably higher than the number mentioned in district files, at least as the files were coded. Data obtained from the second question (reasons not mentioned), however, were quite different from the file data.

According to District 4J files, the greatest number of transfers were requested to enable a student either to continue in a school she or he had moved away from, or in the case of boundary confusions, to attend junior or senior high school with his or her friends from elementary or junior high school; these might be considered reasons of stability--in cases where the family has moved, they might also be seen as expressions of satisfaction with the previously attended schools.

The second most frequent type of reason indicated in district records was to enable a student to take advantage of particular schools' programs and/or general environments. At an elementary level, the locations of requested and original schools were frequently at the center of parents' requests for transfers: they were concerned about the general safety of routes to the schools, the amounts of traffic along the routes, and the proximity of the schools to after-school child care.

As was mentioned earlier, data obtained from the first question on the questionnaire follow closely to that obtained from district files. Data from the second question are revealing: of the reasons parents indicated that they had not mentioned to the district, 43 percent concerned problems in, or dissatisfaction with original schools. Another

20 percent had not mentioned that they desired to send their children to particular schools because of the schools' programs and/or general environments. It would seem that parents had understated to the district desires both to get away from perceived inadequacies at particular schools and to go to particular schools because of their programs and/or general environments.

Why certain schools? Some schools predominantly attracted transfer requests to them; other schools had transfers primarily requested away from them. And some schools were involved in more transfer requests than other schools. What caused these patterns to emerge?

At the senior high school level, two schools attracted large numbers of transfer requests to them; and two schools had large numbers of transfer requests away from them. School boundaries, school programs, and general environment were apparently major causes for transfer requests.

At the junior high school level, one school attracted large numbers of requests to it; and two schools had large numbers of transfer requests away from them.

The one school which attracted a large number of transfer requests is one of the most unique schools in District 4J: the curriculum is periodically revised, many classes are offered on a three- or six-week basis, many classes have been offered at student request, no classes are required for completion, and written evaluations have taken the place of grades. Modeled after William Glasser's "school without failure," the school is probably the most well-known of the district's few "experimental" schools; the local news media have probably carried more (non-sports) news about this school than any other single school in the district.

It is apparently this school's uniqueness (and perhaps also its notoriety) which attracts many of the transfer requests: the largest number of requests to this school (35 percent of 43), according to District 4J data, were specifically for reasons of its program and/or general environment.

At the elementary level, several schools were involved in relatively large

numbers of transfer requests: three schools attracted large numbers of requests to them; and four schools had large numbers of transfers requested away from them.

Geography is probably more important at the elementary level than at any other level. Transportation and safety are also important factors at this level. Schools which are relatively isolated received few transfer requests.

Where did parents learn of transfers? According to the questionnaire data, parents had found out about transfers primarily from school officials, guidance counselors, friends, and from central office personnel. Other parents, however, simply assumed that they could get a transfer, were aware from common knowledge that they could get one.

It might be noted that the questionnaire data seem to indicate that most of those parents who had gone to the top of the center of authority in the district--to the central office--were parents in the upper-income brackets. Of the fifteen families who had gone to the central offices for information about obtaining a transfer, twelve had incomes of over $12,000, eight had incomes of over $15,000. Those in the questionnaire sample who were aware from common knowledge that it was possible to get transfers were also from the upper-income brackets.

Were parents satisfied with their children's present school situation? According to the questionnaire data, 90 percent of the parents who had requested transfers were either ver satisfied or satisfied with their children's present school situation; 2 percent were slightly satisfied or neutral; 6 percent were slightly dissatisfied; and only 2 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Did students in the district become more homogeneously grouped? The final question with which we were concerned was whether students in District 4J had become more or less homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socio-economic status) as a result of its transfer policy. Questionnaire data only tell half of the story: although there are data on the direction of socio-economic movement between schools,

there are not data concerning the present socio-economic composition of district schools. Unfortunately, the socio-economic composition of school attendance areas cannot be easily extrapolated from any existing data, including the 1970 U. S. Census data. Thus, the most we can convey here is the direction of socio-economic movement; this we will do, drawing from the questionnaire data.

At the high school level, parents who requested transfers for the 1971-72 school year were predominantly of high socio-economic status (28 percent of the male parents were blue-collar workers, 31 percent were white-collar workers, 41 percent were managerial-professionals; 43 percent had received at least a bachelor's degree; 39 percent earned $10,000-$15,000; 48 percent earned $15,000 or more). Certain high schools gained students of high socio-economic status; others lost such students. Questionnaire data are not sufficient to reveal all of the trends.

At the junior high school level, parents who requested transfers were of mixed (though high) socio-economic status (53 percent of the male parents were blue-collar workers, 19 percent were white-collar workers, 28 percent were managerial-professionals; 55 percent had received at least a bachelor's degree; 36 percent earned $10,000-$15,000, 40 percent earned over $15,000). The "experimental" school noted earlier gained students of high, medium, and low socio-economic status; one junior high lost students of medium socio-economic status, and another lost students of medium to high socio-economic status. Data are insufficient to determine any trends for other junior high schools.

At the elementary school level, parents who requested transfers were of medium to high socio-economic status (21 percent of the male parents were blue-collar workers, 23 percent were white-collar workers, and 45 percent were managerial-professionals; 54 percent had received at least a bachelor's degree; 51 percent of the families earned $10,000-$15,000, 24 percent earned over $15,000). Three schools gained students of high socio-economic status; two lost students of high socio-economic status, and one

school lost students of mixed socio-economic status. Data are insufficient to reveal any trends for other elementary schools.

Additional Data from the Questionnaire

Although we did not originally intend to study the decision-making behavior of those administering District 4J's transfer policy, responses to our questionnaire provided some interesting data concerning that matter. These data are the following statements (in answer to open questions):

> "My child has made very good progress in school this year. The opportunity of choosing her own study areas has greatly increased her motivation and commitment to the job. She has voluntarily registered for courses to improve her weak areas, is eager to attend school, proud of belonging to that school, and takes full responsibility for her school work. This program has my full support--I am only distressed that the transfer was only granted for one year and we can look forward to the same hassle in getting another transfer for next year."

> "(-----) is an outstanding school with so many opportunities for kids. My children have made many nice friends--students and teachers. Only sorry that they must go to a different high school and have to start all over." (Parent whose request had been denied)

> "but we were told that we would be denied transfer to junior high at (-----)."

> "The situation at (-----) has worsened and we are requesting again for transfer for the three youngest this coming fall. We feel the program at (-----) is completely without direction and the children (ours and classmates) are not progressing to the level they should for their ages."

> "My child is exceptionally bright--school held no challenges--boredom caused truancy--no one seemed interested in giving her anything to 'get her teeth into.' Also an experimenter, a daredevil, and innovative. School suggested transfer--seemed to want to be rid of her. We did not transfer because of transportation problems--and school problems remain."

> "First transfer request was denied [asked for (-----)]. (-----) was difficult for one child--he never adjusted!"

These data raise a number of questions: Why are some people apparently "hassled" and others (those who didn't make such comments) not? Why were some reasons apparently "legitimate" and others not? Are student transfers being used in a retributive manner by schools?

Validity of the Data

We must mention a number of limitations of the data discussed above. In

doing so, we will first consider the data which we received from District 4J, then the data collected via our questionnaire.

There are at least two limitations of the data collected from District 4J files, both concerning the reasons for which transfers were requested: (1) As we have mentioned, District 4J personnel, in coding the reasons for which transfers were requested, represented the entire set of reasons contained in each written request by only a single coded reason: certainly, considerable information was lost; not to mention the interpretive bias of the person (or persons) doing the coding. And (2) The reasons for transfer requests contained in the parents' written requests to the district were probably only those reasons which parents thought legitimate enough to obtain approval of their requests; "illegitimate," but just as real, reasons were very likely not to have been included in those written requests. Questionnaire data support this contention.

The data obtained from the questionnaire have at least four limitations:

(1) Responses were received from only 42 percent of the families to whom we mailed the questionnaire. This is a sample large enough to make qualified statements such as we have throughout this paper, but there are probably segments of the population which have not been properly represented. One particular population which we know to be improperly represented is that population of families who had been denied their requests for transfers. District 4J data show that approximately 10 percent of the transfer requests for the 1971-72 school year were denied; this would involve 30 families. However, only two of the 117 responses which we received were from families whose requests had been denied. As one can notice, we have not attempted to generalize about this particular population.

(2) We assume that female and male parents in any given family would have answered in the same manner. This assumption is weak--since there were several questions in which there was room for subjectivity; e.g., questions concerning reasons for their request, and satisfaction

with their child's present school situation. (3) We assume that, in asking parents to give information only about their most recent transfer request, we are not losing an inordinate amount of information. And, (4) in regard to parents' satisfaction with their children's present school situations, the data must be taken with a grain of salt: a test of parental satisfaction over time would likely provide different results than a test, such as the one in the questionnaire, of parental satisfaction soon after they have been positively reinforced by the granting of their transfer request.

Summary of Findings

(1) As presently structured, the District 4J transfer policy appears to have been utilized primarily by those parents and students of high socio-economic status.

(2) Any one or a combination of the following factors might have touched off requests for transfers:

(a) If a family had moved and wished their child(ren) to continue at a previously attended school;

(b) If the program and/or general environment of a particular school were differentiated from that of adjacent schools;

(c) If, for whatever reasons, parents became dissatisfied with a particular school, and there was a more attractive (and known) alternative within a reasonable distance;

(d) If, in the case of a junior or senior high school, boundaries were drawn so as to divide parts of the student body of a feeder school;

(e) If, in the case of an elementary school, a major traffic arterial bisected its attendance area.

(3) Parents had likely learned about the possibility of obtaining a school transfer from a variety of sources. School officials, guidance counselors, friends, and the district offices were the most frequently mentioned sources.

(4) Parents were apparently very largely satisfied with their children's present school situation.

(5) Available data are insufficient to determine whether students in District 4J are becoming more or less homogeneously grouped in terms of socio-economic status.

Discussion

Although there are no data to support them, following are a number of tentative conclusions concerning family choice in schooling:

(1) A large number of requests to some schools may have been caused in part by the existence of:

(a) A large percentage of rented homes within the schools' attendance areas--this might have precipitated requests from families who had moved and desired their children to continue in the same school.

(b) Larger amounts of information (particularly via the mass media) about those schools--this might have caused parents to be more aware of alternatives to their present school, possibly of alternatives more desirable than their present school;

(c) Peer pressure on parents and/or children to attend those schools--the styles of schooling, or the schools themselves, may have been in vogue at the time.

(2) As presently structured and administrated, the District 4J transfer policy may discriminate against the participation of families of low socio-economic status, for four reasons:

(a) The availability of school transfers is not publicly advertised; studies have shown that it is not generally people of low socio-economic status who have access to privileged information--if people don't know about a policy, they can't take advantage of it.

(b) Information about various schools is not generally available; again, it is generally not people of low socio-economic status who have access to privileged information--if people do not know what their alternatives are, they can't choose from among them.

(c) Transportation is not provided; only those who can afford the additional time and/or money can take advantage of the transfer policy--this is particularly true at the elementary school level, as such students are often not able to manage medium-long distances by themselves.

(d) In deciding that they "can't give everyone" a transfer, administrators may be discriminating against those people who don't know how to convince them of the validity of their arguments--it is likely the highly schooled people (people of high socio-economic status) who can best sell their arguments.

In reading this study, certain

questions come to mind. We've looked at who appears to be benefiting from District 4J's transfer policy. Is this as it should be? There are various reasons parents request transfers. Are these reasons valid? Should any reason be valid? Apparently not all parents know that they can try to get a transfer. Should more parents know about transfers? If we wanted more people to know about transfers, how would we start to "publicize" it?

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS ANYWHERE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. In order to protect your privacy, the information should be filled out on a completely anonymous basis only. Thank you.

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(1) Person(s) filling out questionnaire:

___ (1) Father
___ (2) Mother
___ (3) Father and Mother
___ (4) Other _____

(2) Number of children: ___

(3) Age of each child: _____

(4, 5) Formal schooling completed:

Mother	Father	
___	___	(1) less than high school
___	___	(2) high school
___	___	(3) two years college or vocational school
___	___	(4) bachelor's degree
___	___	(5) advanced college degree

(6) Combined yearly income of family:

___ (1) less than $4,000
___ (2) 4,000 - 5,999
___ (3) 6,000 - 7,999
___ (4) 8,000 - 9,999
___ (5) 10,000 - 11,999
___ (6) 12,000 - 14,999
___ (7) 15,000 - 24,999
___ (8) 25,000 or more

(7) Occupation of father: _____

(8) Occupation of mother: _____

(9) How long have you lived in your present junior high school district?

___ (1) less than 1 year
___ (2) 1 - 2 years
___ (3) 2 - 3 years
___ (4) 3 - 5 years
___ (5) 5 - 10 years
___ (6) more than 10 years

(10) How much longer do you think you will be staying in your present junior high school district?

___ (1) less than 1 year
___ (2) 1 - 2 years
___ (3) 2 - 3 years
___ (4) 3 - 5 years
___ (5) 5 - 10 years
___ (6) more than 10 years

(11) Number of children school transfers requested for: ___

(12) Age of each child transfer requested for: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR
MOST RECENT TRANSFER ONLY

(13 - 16) Date transfer requested: _____

(17, 18) School transfer requested to: _____

(19, 20) School transfer requested from: _____

(21) Reasons for request (as stated to school district):

(22) Other contributing reasons for request (not mentioned in request to school district):

(23) Request was: ___ (1) Accepted
___ (2) Denied

(24) Where did you find out that you could get a school transfer? (Friends, neighbors, children, at work, from the principal, from the guidance counselor, from the district offices, etc.):

(25) Before you requested a school transfer, how easy (hard) did you think it would be to get a transfer?

___ (1) very easy
___ (2) easy
___ (3) more easy than hard
___ (4) neither easy nor hard
___ (5) more hard than easy
___ (6) hard
___ (7) very hard
___ (8) didn't know

(26) After you requested a transfer, how easy (hard) did you feel it had been to get a transfer?

___ (1) very easy
___ (2) easy
___ (3) more easy than hard
___ (4) neither easy nor hard
___ (5) more hard than easy
___ (6) hard
___ (7) very hard

(27) How satisfied (dissatisfied) are you with the school situation your child is in now?

___ (1) very satisfied
___ (2) satisfied
___ (3) slightly satisfied
___ (4) neutral
___ (5) slightly dissatisfied
___ (6) dissatisfied
___ (7) very dissatisfied

(28) Please explain your answer to question #27: